

5 March 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
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State Dept., JCS reviews completed

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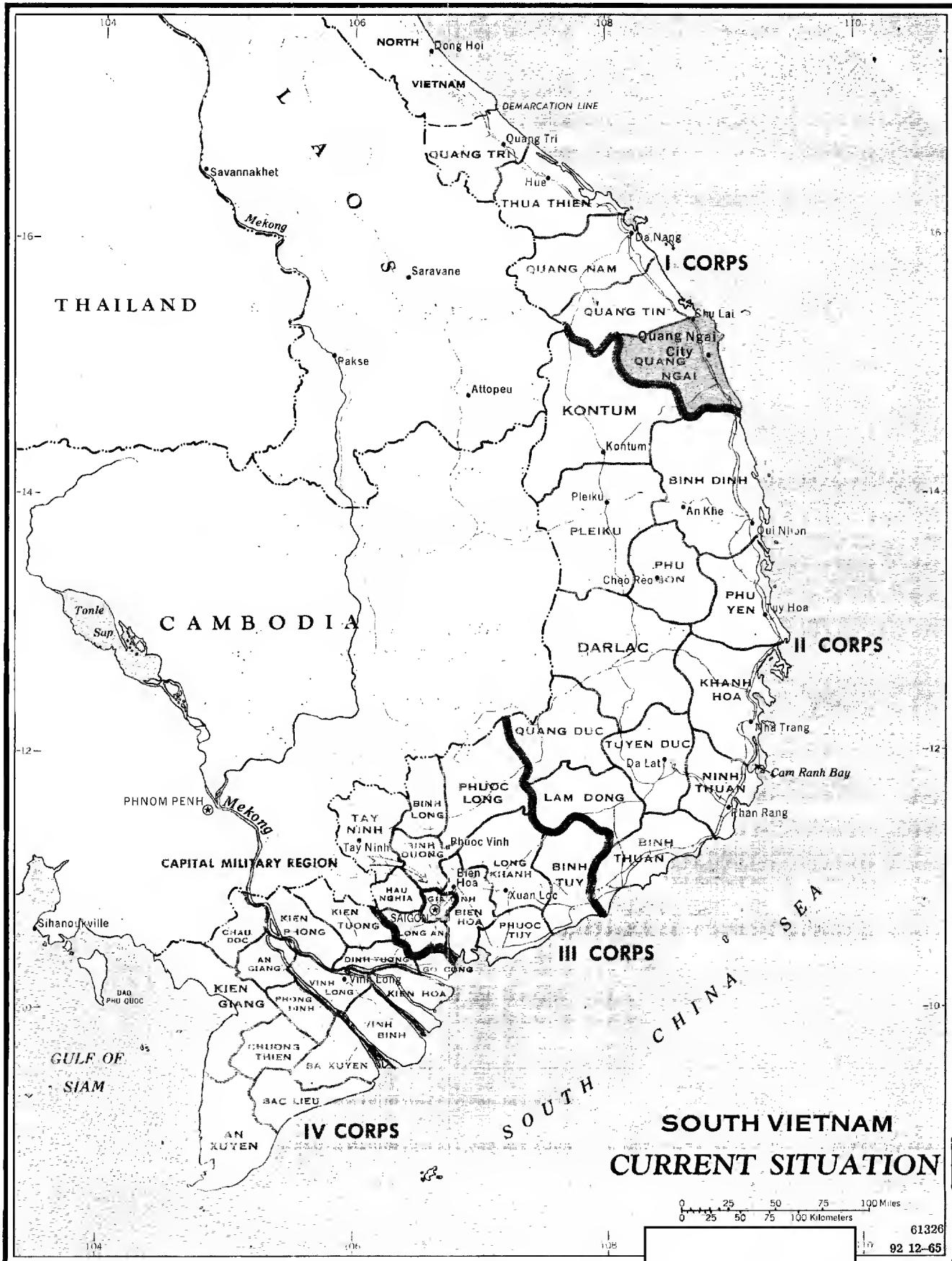
1. Vietnam: Current situation report. (Page 1)
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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

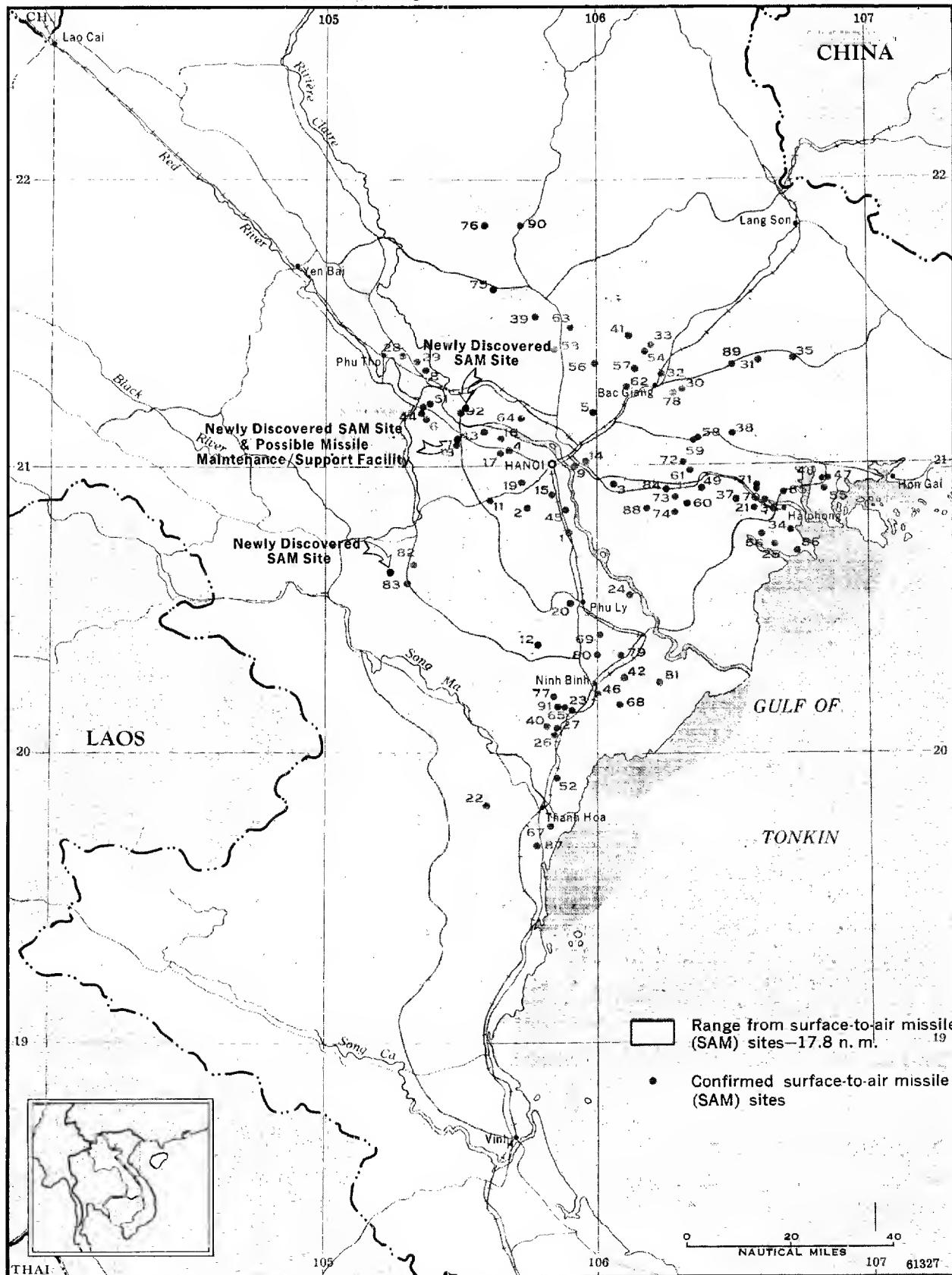
The Military Situation in South Vietnam: US Marines and South Vietnamese troops initiating a search-and-destroy operation in Quang Ngai Province yesterday encountered stiff enemy opposition about eight miles northwest of the provincial capital. Official reports identified Communist forces in the area as elements of the North Vietnamese 36th Regiment, and US Marines claimed to have located the regimental command post. Allied casualties totaled 42 killed (30 US) and 182 wounded (100 US), while Viet Cong losses were 110 killed.

Intense enemy antiaircraft fire, including bursts at an altitude of 2,000 feet, was reported by pilots in the vicinity of allied landing zones during the initial phase of the operation. One US jet aircraft and one helicopter were shot down, and three US helicopters were damaged. South Vietnamese forces later reported the capture of two Communist antiaircraft guns.

On the previous day, South Vietnamese rangers operating some three miles farther south had established heavy contact with an estimated battalion of North Vietnamese troops, killing 23 and capturing two others. Government casualties were three killed and 19 wounded (2 US). Information obtained during the action apparently contributed to the shifting of the allied effort to the north yesterday.

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NORTH VIETNAM: SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE SITES



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Communist Military Developments: Drone photography [redacted] indicates the presence of three new SAM sites in the DRV, one of which may be a maintenance or supply facility. One of the sites is located some 42 miles southwest of Hanoi and the other two are located some 22 miles west-northwest of Hanoi. If confirmed, the total number of SAM sites would be 96.

Four North Vietnamese MIG fighters unsuccessfully attacked a flight of US F4C Phantom fighters during a strike against the Hanoi - Lao Cai rail line on the morning of 4 March. No damage was apparently inflicted on either side. The DRV fighters were under effective positive ground control during the engagement.

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[Political Developments in South Vietnam: Relations between Premier Ky and I Corps Commander General Thi appear to be deteriorating.]

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[According to a member of the ruling military Directorate, the premier told a group of selected generals on 2 March that he had been receiving disturbing reports which alleged that residents of central Vietnam were strongly objecting to the arbitrary methods used by the I Corps commander. Ky also stated that General Thi had recently approached a group led by retired General Tran Van Don in an attempt to form a political alliance. Premier Ky reportedly left for Hué on 3 March to conduct a first-hand investigation of the situation.]

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France-NATO: [De Gaulle appears ready to begin withdrawing the remaining French troops from NATO and ridding France of US troops and bases.]

[Letters informing the other NATO members what France intends to do will probably be sent within the next week or ten days. According to the French representative to NATO, the letters to the US, UK, and West Germany may be sent earlier--perhaps within the next few days. Already the essential elements of the French demands have been expressed informally in a series of meetings with other NATO members in Paris.]

[The progressive withdrawal of French forces from NATO over the last seven years has reduced Paris' NATO commitments to two army divisions in West Berlin and West Germany, five submarines, and 16 tactical air squadrons. In addition, Paris probably now intends to withdraw those French officers still assigned to NATO commands.]

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[France intends to continue to station some 65,000 French forces in West Germany despite their withdrawal from NATO commitment. The US Embassy in Bonn believes that a legal basis for such an arrangement exists and Chancellor Erhard acknowledged publicly last week that it was a "theoretical possibility."]

[Paris' handling of the notification thus far appears clearly aimed at prodding at least the major NATO nations into bilateral negotiations to cover any new military political relationships.]

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[the letters would be part "notification" and part a proposal for new negotiations on the forms]

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of French cooperation "in peace and war." Some of these negotiations, [redacted] could be worked out between military commanders but some would require treatment at the political level.]

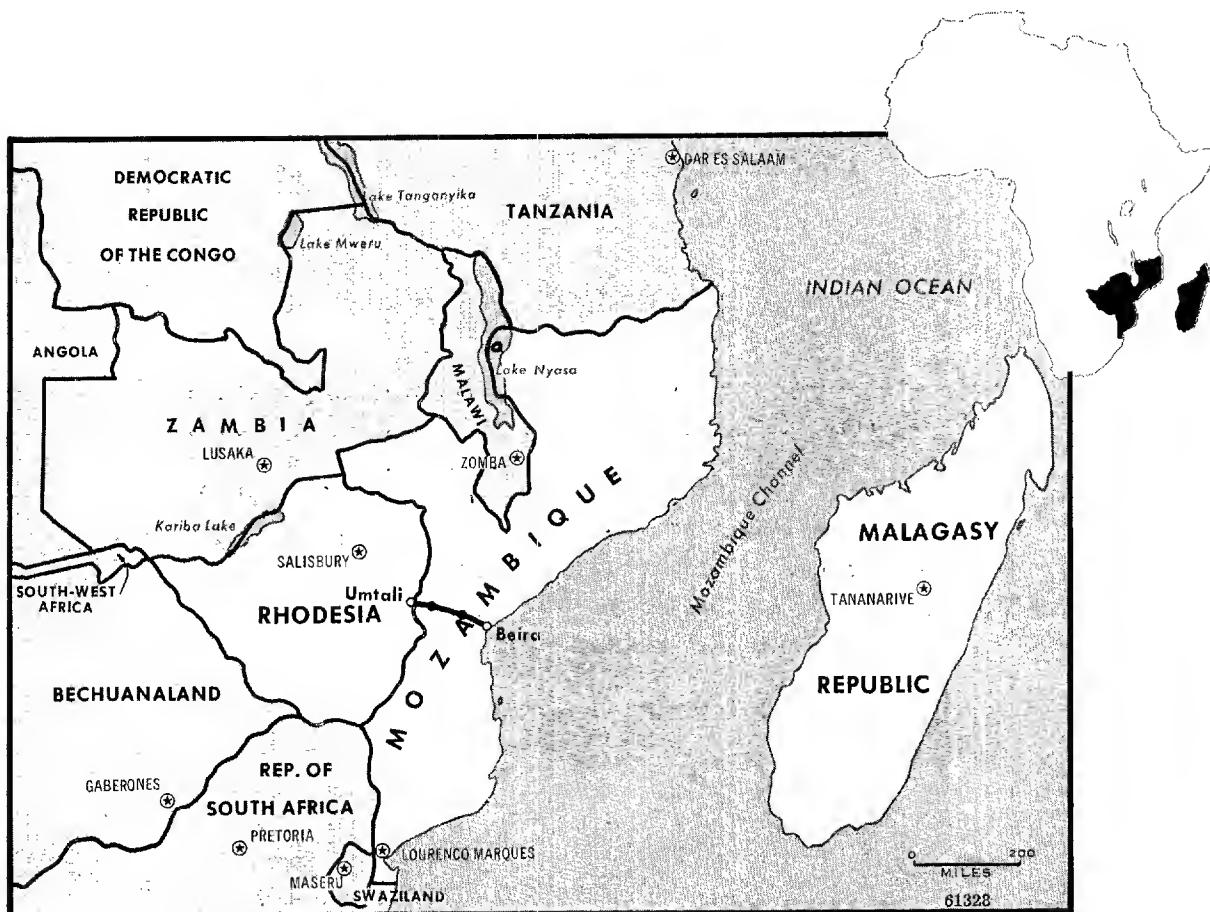
[Paris probably hopes to leave enough leeway in its formulations to encourage the other NATO nations to make proposals or reach agreements that will not leave all of the onus for withdrawal on France. At the same time, Paris has let it be known that its terms for timing and manner of withdrawal will be harsher if the other members refuse to talk and that France could turn toward closer relations with the Soviet Union.]

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UK-Rhodesia: [London is working on a new plan to hamper sea shipments of oil to Rhodesia.]

[The plan envisages aerial surveillance of ships and threats of interception. The Malagasy Republic professes willingness to let British planes operate from one of its airfields if London can obtain the French approval required by the French-Malagasy defense agreement.]

[If aerial surveillance and the threat of publicity fails to divert a suspect tanker, London might have a Royal Navy frigate intercept it. This plan, however, hinges on cooperation from the country in which the ship is registered, and from the captain of the individual ship. Short of war the UK has no legal right to use force to divert a ship, and the frigate would not be authorized to do so.]

[London also is urging the Portuguese Government to take steps to deny facilities in Portuguese Mozambique for transshipping oil from the port of Beira to Rhodesia. So far, however, there is no indication that Portugal will interfere in the commercial operations of firms located in Mozambique.]

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NOTES

ELDO-UK: [The March meeting of the European Launcher Development Organization (ELDO) Council has been indefinitely postponed because of Britain's decision to hold elections on 31 March. It previously had been reported that at this meeting the British planned to announce their withdrawal from ELDO and urge its dissolution. The postponement will give the French, who are eager to develop an independent European rocket capability, time to try to persuade the British to change their minds.]

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Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

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Commandant, United States Marine Corps

U.S. Rep., Military Committee and Standing Group, NATO

Supreme Allied Commander, Europe

Commander in Chief, Pacific

Commander in Chief, Atlantic

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The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

The Department of Justice

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The Federal Bureau of Investigation

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National Aeronautics and Space Administration

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